

Supplemental Report 3

Flanner House Elementary School Detailed Performance Assessment and Profile



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| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| ▪ Grades served in 2002-03 | K-4 |
| ▪ Maximum school size in 2002-03 | 150 students |
| ▪ Grades served at capacity | K-5 |
| ▪ Maximum school size at capacity | 250 students |

This supplemental report presents information about the school in three sections:

- Flanner House Elementary's Students (enrollment and demographic information)
- Performance at Flanner House Elementary
- Detailed Description of Flanner House Elementary's Programs and Activities

Flanner House Elementary School's Students

Figure 1. Enrollment and demand for the Flanner House Elementary School in 2002-03

| | Number of students |
|---|--------------------|
| Maximum possible enrollment in first year pursuant to Charter | 150 |
| Number of students enrolled ¹ | 132 |
| Number of applications received ² | 154 |

¹Source: Indiana Department of Education, based on school's count of "Average Daily Membership" (measure the Department uses to count enrollment).

²Source: Based on school self-report of data.

Figure 2. Flanner House Elementary School student composition

| Gender ¹ | | Race & Ethnicity ² | | | | Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch ² | Special Education ³ | Limited English Proficient ⁴ |
|---------------------|--------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------|---|--------------------------------|---|
| Male | Female | African-American | Hispanic | Caucasian | Other | | | |
| 40.3% | 59.7% | 100% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 81.1% | 1.5% | 0% |

Note: See main report for comparative data.

¹Source: School self-report of data on the last day of school.

²Source: Indiana Department of Education.

³Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Exceptional Learners, count reported December 2002.

⁴Source: Indiana Department of Education Division of Language and Minority Programs, count reported October 2002.

Figure 3. Percentage of students in Flanner House Elementary, IPS, and Indiana passing ISTEP+ tests at the *beginning* of the fall 2002 school year¹

| | English | | | Math | | | Both | | |
|--|---------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
| | FHE | IPS | IN | FHE | IPS | IN | FHE | IPS | IN |
| Percent of 3 rd Graders Passing | 67% | 58% | 72% | 67% | 57% | 67% | 52% | 44% | 59% |

Source: Indiana Department of Education. City-wide data unavailable.

¹Since the charter school's students took these tests near the beginning of the school year, these percentages represent the starting levels of performance of the charter students, not how much the students learned at Flanner House Elementary School.

Performance at Flanner House Elementary School

The section below describes Flanner House Elementary School's performance over the first school year by addressing the common performance indicators in the Mayor's Charter School Performance Framework. The complete Performance Framework may be viewed on-line at http://www.indygov.org/mayor/charter/accountability_report.

Is the academic program a success?

Are students making substantial gains over time?

Test score analysis. Flanner House Elementary administered the standardized Terra Nova exam in reading, language, and math to its 1st, 2nd, and 4th grade students in both fall 2002 and spring 2003. Figure 4 shows the gains made by students in reading, math, and language between the fall and the spring. Each number in Figure 4 indicates the percentage change in the average test score achieved in a particular grade and subject from fall to spring. For example, the +7.3 in the first row indicates that the average reading score for 1st graders was 7.3% higher in spring 2003 than it was in fall 2002.

Figure 4. Percentage change in average Terra Nova Test Scores between fall 2002 and spring 2003 at Flanner House Elementary School

| | 1 st Grade | 2 nd Grade | 4 th Grade |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Reading | +7.3 | +5.6 | +2.5 |
| Math | +7.0 | +5.6 | +3.3 |
| Language | +5.4 | +4.4 | +2.7 |

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data," prepared by New American Schools, Arlington, VA, 2003.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

Figure 4 shows that students made progress, on average, between the fall and the spring in all grades and all subjects tested. But how large were these gains? One way to find out is to compare the progress of Flanner House Elementary's students to that of other students nationally who took the same exams at the same points in their academic careers.

Since Terra Nova is a national standardized test, we can ask the following question: if we ranked all the students across the country who took the Terra Nova, where would *Flanner House Elementary students stand on average* in that ranking?

Figure 5 provides the answer. The first row of the table shows how 1st graders at Flanner House performed in reading. In the fall, on average 1st graders at Flanner House scored as well as or better than 47% of all students nationwide in reading. We call this number, 47, the school's "Fall Average Percentile" for 1st graders in reading. The next column shows that by the spring, on average Flanner House 1st graders performed as well as or better than 75% of all students nationwide. The school's "Spring Average Percentile" was 75.

Figure 5. Academic progress of Flanner House Elementary School students, fall 2002 through spring 2003

| Grade/subject | Fall Average Percentile | Spring Average Percentile | Gained ground vs. students nationally | Stayed even with students nationally | Lost ground vs. students nationally |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 st Grade Reading | 47 | 75 | ✓ | | |
| 1 st Grade Math | 44 | 70 | ✓ | | |
| 1 st Grade Language | 53 | 55 | ✓ | | |
| 2 nd Grade Reading | 60 | 71 | ✓ | | |
| 2 nd Grade Math | 54 | 59 | ✓ | | |
| 2 nd Grade Language | 61 | 70 | ✓ | | |
| 4 th Grade Reading | 58 | 59 | ✓ | | |
| 4 th Grade Math | 54 | 47 | | | ✓ |
| 4 th Grade Language | 50 | 56 | ✓ | | |

Source: "Progress of Indianapolis Charter Schools: An Analysis of National Test Score Data," prepared by New American Schools, 2003.

Note: conclusions about whether students gained or lost ground were based on simple comparisons of fall and spring percentiles.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on test score analysis.

As displayed in Figure 5, it is clear that, on average, Flanner House's students gained ground in all grades and subjects, with the exception of 4th grade math. In math, on average Flanner House students performed as well as or better than 54% of students nationally in the fall. But on average students outranked 47% of students nationally in the spring. So the table indicates that Flanner House 4th graders "lost ground" in math. As Figure 4 illustrates, on average, these students did progress in math — but not as much as their peers nationally.

Expert site visit findings. The expert site visit team praised the school's academic program as "exemplary." According to the team, teachers set high expectations and emphasize rigor in the classroom. The team further reported that "students consistently demonstrate high motivation, effort, understanding and appreciation for the importance of character and learning."

Is the organization viable?

Is the school in sound fiscal health? Eighty-one percent of parents surveyed at Flanner House Elementary School reported they are satisfied with the school's finances while 11% reported they "do not know." At the same time, 29% of school staff reported their satisfaction with school finances while 14% were "uncertain."

The Mayor's Office commissioned a review of each school's finances. A summary of Flanner House Elementary School's finances, including financial statements, appears in Supplemental Report 4.

Are the school's student enrollment, attendance, and retention rates strong? The school experienced strong attendance and retention rates over the course of the first school year. Its attendance rate was 96.3% in 2002-03 (see Figure 6). Ninety-seven percent of parents surveyed at Flanner House expressed their intention to continue to enroll their children in the school as long as the school serves students their children's age.

Figure 6. Flanner House Elementary School attendance rate in 2002-03 school year

| | Attendance rate |
|--|-----------------|
| Flanner House Elementary School ¹ | 96.3% |
| Indianapolis Public Schools ² | 95.3% |
| Indiana schools ² | 95.7% |

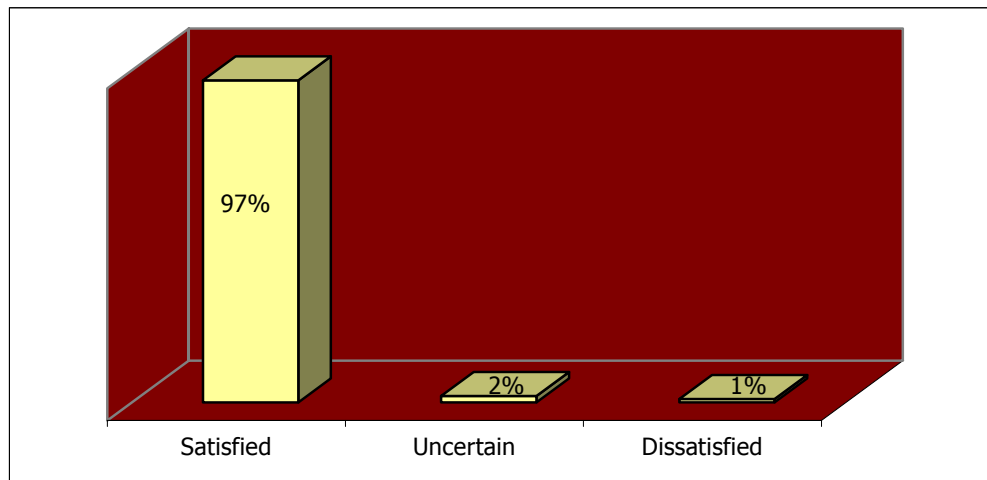
¹Source: School self report.

²Source: Indiana Department of Education. City-wide data unavailable.

Is the school's board active and competent in its oversight? Governance reviews showed that Flanner House Elementary School has active board oversight, proper financial management procedures, and a core team of staff members committed to securing resources for the teachers and students to provide a nurturing and stimulating educational environment. The school also benefits from its affiliation with its parent organization, Flanner House of Indianapolis, Inc., a provider of child care, youth and senior citizen programs, cultural and recreational activities, counseling, and other social services to the local community. Indeed, some board members from the umbrella organization served on the school's founding board.

Is there a high level of parent satisfaction with the school? Figure 7 shows that 97% of parents reported overall satisfaction with the school in the parent survey. Figure 8 displays parent satisfaction levels with different aspects of Flanner House Elementary.

Figure 7. Overall parent satisfaction with Flanner House Elementary School



Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. "Satisfied" includes "somewhat satisfied," and "very satisfied" responses. "Dissatisfied" includes "somewhat dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied" responses.

Figure 8. Parent satisfaction with features at Flanner House Elementary School

| School Feature | Satisfied ¹ | Don't Know | Dissatisfied ² |
|---|------------------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Class size | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| School size | 98% | 0% | 2% |
| Length of the school day | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Length of the school year | 98% | 0% | 2% |
| Individual attention teachers give to students | 96% | 1% | 3% |
| Academic standards for students | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Curriculum | 97% | 0% | 3% |
| Materials to support the curriculum | 95% | 2% | 3% |
| Quality of teaching | 98% | 0% | 2% |
| Technology | 89% | 2% | 9% |
| Extracurricular activities | 77% | 2% | 21% |
| Opportunities for parent participation | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Parent information about student learning | 93% | 1% | 6% |
| Communication from the school | 90% | 1% | 9% |
| Sense of pride teachers and students have in school | 98% | 0% | 2% |

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

¹Includes "satisfied," "moderately satisfied," and "very satisfied" responses.

²Includes "very dissatisfied" and "moderately dissatisfied" responses.

Is the school administration strong in its academic and organizational leadership?

The governance reviews conducted by the Mayor's Office found that the management and teaching staff have built a "family" atmosphere that makes extensive use of parent volunteers. The review recommended that the school could improve management by developing a more efficient system of tracking records and keeping files up to date. According to the expert site visit team, the director of education of the school is "exemplary."

Eighty-six percent of teachers reported in a survey that they were satisfied by the leadership provided by their school's administration. Of parents surveyed, 96% reported they were satisfied with the people running Flanner House Elementary School.

Is the school meeting its operations and access obligations related to: organizational structure and governance obligations; physical plants that are safe and conducive to learning; fair and appropriate pupil enrollment processes; reasonable and safe transportation options available to eligible students; and legal obligations related to access and services to special needs and English as a second language students?

Flanner House Elementary School satisfactorily met its obligations in 2002-2003 for compliance with laws and regulations and access to students across Indianapolis. Neither the Mayor's Office's internal systems nor the expert site visit team indicated any significant concerns related to these obligations. Figure 9 displays levels of parent and staff satisfaction with various aspects of school operations.

Figure 9. Parent and school staff satisfaction with Flanner House Elementary School operations

| School Feature | Parents ¹ | | | School Staff ^{1,4} | | |
|---|------------------------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| | Satisfied ² | Don't Know | Dis-satisfied ³ | Satisfied ⁵ | Un-certain ⁶ | Dis-satisfied ⁷ |
| School leadership ⁸ | 96% | 1% | 3% | 86% | 14% | 0% |
| School finances | 81% | 11% | 8% | 29% | 14% | 57% |
| Safety | | | | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| School facilities | 96% | 0% | 5% | 67% | 17% | 17% |
| Enrollment process | 99% | 1% | 0% | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Services for special needs students ^{9,10} | 96% | N/A | 4% | 67% | 17% | 17% |
| Transportation (overall) ¹⁰ | | | | 60% | 20% | 20% |
| Drop-off/Pick-up time | 100% | N/A | 0% | | | |
| Drop-off/pick-up location | 97% | N/A | 3% | | | |
| Bus condition/reliability | 80% | N/A | 20% | | | |
| Time your child is on bus | 85% | N/A | 15% | | | |

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school parents and staffs administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

¹Blank areas denote that the applicable group was not surveyed about satisfaction with the particular feature.

²Includes "satisfied," "moderately satisfied," and "very satisfied" responses.

³Includes "very dissatisfied" and "moderately dissatisfied" responses.

⁴Calculations for staff surveys do not include "don't know/not applicable" responses.

⁵Includes "somewhat satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses.

⁶Uncertain was ranked as three on a scale of one to five.

⁷Includes "not too dissatisfied" and "quite dissatisfied" responses.

⁸Wording of parent and staff surveys questions vary slightly.

⁹Special needs students include those for whom English is a second language or who have disabilities, academic difficulties, etc.

¹⁰N/A denotes "not applicable." Since not all students used special education or transportation services, only the responses of those parents who expressed an opinion about these services were included in these calculations.

Is the school providing the appropriate conditions for success?

Is the school's mission clearly understood by all stakeholders? The expert site visit team found through focus groups with students, parents, teachers, and administrators that they all "support the mission of the school – excellence and attainment of potential for each child." Additionally, 86% of staff members surveyed reported that they were aware of the goals of their charter school.

Does the school have a high quality curriculum and supporting materials for each grade? More than nine in ten Flanner House Elementary School parents (95%) reported that they were satisfied with their school's materials to support the curriculum. As Figure 10 illustrates, about two-thirds of Flanner House staff members also reported satisfaction with the resources available for instruction at their charter school, while the rest reported they were uncertain about their satisfaction.

Figure 10. School staff satisfaction with features at Flanner House Elementary School

| School Feature | Satisfied ¹ | Un-certain ² | Dis-satisfied ³ |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| School size | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Length of the school day | 83% | 17% | 0% |
| Length of the school year | 83% | 17% | 0% |
| Student-teacher ratio with respect to individual time given to students | 83% | 17% | 0% |
| Ability of school to fulfill its mission | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Academic standards for students | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Curriculum | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Resources available for instruction | 67% | 33% | 0% |
| Quality of teaching | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Classroom management and student behavior | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Technology | 67% | 17% | 17% |
| Parent participation and involvement | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Information about student learning that parents receive | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Accessibility and openness to parents | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Sense of pride students and staff have in the school | 100% | 0% | 0% |

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing or "don't know/not applicable" responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

¹Includes "somewhat satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses.

²Uncertain was ranked as three on a scale of one to five.

³Includes "not too dissatisfied" and "quite dissatisfied" responses.

Does the school effectively use learning standards and assessments to inform and improve instruction? The expert site visit team reported that "classroom observations, examination of student work and focus groups suggest that there are high levels of expectations and rigor for all students." As Figures 8 and 10 further illustrate, no parents or staff members reported dissatisfaction with academic standards for students.

Is the school climate conducive to student and staff success? The expert site visit team noted that "all constituents report that the school is safe and very family and child centered." Furthermore, 100% of staff members reported in surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter schools that they were satisfied with safety at their school.

Additionally, in the surveys, all Flanner House staff members (excluding one member who did not respond to this question) reported they are satisfied with classroom management and student behavior at their charter school. The surveys also indicated that 98% of parents and 100% of school staff members (excluding one member who did not respond to this question) at Flanner House were satisfied with the sense of pride students and teachers have in their school.

Regarding the facility, the expert site visit team noted that "all constituents report that there needs to be more space."

In a survey of Mayor-sponsored charter school staff members, teachers were asked to rate on a nine-point scale (from no influence to a great deal of influence) how well they are able to influence areas that typically create difficulties in helping students succeed. A summary of these survey results for Flanner House are provided in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Flanner House Elementary School teachers' belief in their ability to influence student success

| School Feature | Little or no influence (1-3) | Some influence (4-6) | Quite a bit to a great deal of influence (7-9) |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Controlling disruptive behavior in the classroom | 17% | 0% | 83% |
| Motivating students who show low interest in student work | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Getting students to believe they can do well in school work | 17% | 0% | 83% |
| Helping students to value learning | 17% | 0% | 83% |
| Getting children to follow classroom rules | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Calming a student who is disruptive or noisy | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Establishing a classroom management system | 0% | 0% | 100% |
| Assisting families in helping their children do well in school | 0% | 17% | 83% |

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

Are the teaching processes (pedagogies) consistent with the school's mission?

Survey results show that all staff members (excluding one member who did not respond to this question) at the charter school reported they were satisfied with the school's ability to fulfill its stated mission.

Is ongoing communication with students and parents clear and helpful? Nine out of ten Flanner House parents reported in a survey of Mayor-sponsored charter schools that they were satisfied with communication from their school, such as about special activities, events, and meetings. A high percentage of parents and all school staff (excluding one staff member who did not respond to this question) also reported satisfaction with the information parents receive about student learning, as illustrated in Figures 8 and 10. The expert site visit team reported that "some teachers identified a need for more distributed and systematic processes and timelines for communicating among staff and with parents and other external constituents."

Has the school developed adequate human resource systems and deployed its staff effectively? The site visit team reported that "the [director of education], academic staff and program are exemplary and dedicated to ensuring the success and attainment of potential for each student." The site visit team also suggested that "the school should work with teachers to identify and respond to staff development needs."

Figure 12 shows how staff members responded to a survey about their satisfaction with professional features of the school.

Figure 12. Staff satisfaction with Flanner House Elementary School's professional features

| School Feature | Satisfied ¹ | Un-certain ² | Dis-satisfied ³ |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Salary related to experience | 43% | 29% | 29% |
| Benefits such as health and life insurance, retirement, etc. | 0% | 33% | 67% |
| Work environment | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Number of hours spent engaged in classroom instruction | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Number of hours spent engaged in other activities | 86% | 14% | 0% |
| Time allowed for planning and preparation | 71% | 14% | 14% |
| Amount of paperwork required | 86% | 14% | 0% |
| Greater teacher autonomy in the classroom | 86% | 14% | 0% |
| Level of teacher involvement in school decisions | 86% | 0% | 14% |
| Opportunities for professional development | 71% | 14% | 14% |
| Evaluation or assessment of teacher performance | 83% | 17% | 0% |
| Teachers' non-teaching responsibilities | 100% | 0% | 0% |
| Time staff spend together discussing the needs of individual students | 86% | 14% | 0% |

Source: All results are from confidential surveys of Mayor-sponsored charter school staffs administered spring 2003 by the Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning at the University of Indianapolis.

Note: Calculations do not include missing or "don't know/not applicable" responses. Additionally, some categories may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Note: See Supplemental Report 6 for detailed notes on survey protocol and analysis.

¹Includes "somewhat satisfied" and "very satisfied" responses.

²Uncertain was ranked as three on a scale of one to five.

³Includes "not too dissatisfied" and "quite dissatisfied" responses.

Detailed Description of Flanner House Elementary's Programs and Activities

Sources: Interviews with school officials and expert site visit team members (June 2003) and review of the school's charter application. It is important to note that this information was provided primarily by the schools. It is provided here to offer the public a more detailed picture of the school's programs and activities.

Flanner House Elementary School, previously a private school, sought a charter because it wanted to serve more students, particularly students unable to pay its already low tuition. The school focuses on hard work, achievement, and self-esteem building and continues its "no excuses" philosophy, which emphasizes academics, character, and the belief that all children can learn at high levels, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds. According to the Flanner House Elementary School mission, the school strives to develop the highest potential of students through educating the whole person, ensuring that all students attain basic skills proficiency, and to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills to build a solid foundation and provide positive motivation for life-long learning.

The school has adopted the nationally recognized and research-based Open Court Reading program for English language arts and Everyday Mathematics program developed by the University of Chicago. Project-based learning is a central component in the school's educational program. All students, including those in kindergarten, are required to complete four projects each school year that involve research and oral and visual presentations.

The crux of the school's educational approach is making families an integral part of the students' education. Flanner House has thus created an environment that fully involves parents and the community. Indeed, the school has trouble accommodating all of the parents who want to volunteer.

The school also benefits from the vast experiences and resources of its parent organization, the 100-year old Flanner House of Indianapolis, which provides supplemental services for its families. By helping the whole family to thrive, the school aims to create a complementary home-school environment that nurtures students' academic pursuits.

School culture

- *Relationships built by education director.*

Frances Malone, the charter school's director of education, has been with Flanner House, Inc. for over thirty years. During this time she has held several other positions – teacher, director of the child development center, and principal of the private school. As a result of her many years with the organization and the close-knit nature of the neighborhood in which Flanner House is located, she is now educating second and third generations of Flanner House families. Children she has taught and nurtured in the past now have children and grandchildren in the charter school. Though Flanner House Elementary School draws from greater Indianapolis (children come from as far north as Fishers and as far west as Speedway), Mrs. Malone has created a family and neighborhood environment within the school.

Who are the leaders of this school?

While visiting with a group of fourth graders, one of the expert site visit team members asked, "Who are the leaders of this school?" Each hand shot into the air. The observer thought the students would begin to name the school's teachers and administrators. The students were in fact referring to themselves: the hands in the air did not mean, "I know who the leaders are." Instead, the hands in the air meant, "I am a leader in this school." Apparently, as the oldest students in the school, the fourth graders were constantly told that they were the leaders of the school and as such had to set a good example for the rest of the students.

- *Pride and discipline.* Flanner House has created a highly structured and focused educational environment where all students are expected to respect their teachers, parents, peers, and, as a result, themselves. Students stand when a guest enters the classroom; one child in each class is appointed to greet the guest and explain what the class is currently doing. Some classes even write and sing a welcome song to guests.
- *Staff and parents uphold culture.* The school is vigilant in maintaining its culture through its staff and parents. In staff hiring decisions, the school only employs individuals it believes are a good fit within the existing culture. And, for most students, the past school year was their first year attending Flanner House – while in other schools a culture could change dramatically with the influx of new families, Flanner House's new parents have respected and embraced the school attitudes "veteran" families uphold.
- *Respect for students.* The sentiment behind the school-family bond is extended into the classroom by students and school staff alike. For example, on one occasion, a student earned an "A" grade for the first time. The office announced the student's success over the school's loudspeaker, and the entire school cheered for the student.

Parental involvement

- *Daily parent-teacher contact.* While transportation was offered by the school, no parents requested to use the school's transportation. Instead, parents came into their children's classrooms every day to pick up their children, meaning that each child's family had a daily opportunity to come into the classroom to talk with the teacher.
- *Parent volunteerism and supports.* The level of parent involvement is so high that at times the school cannot accommodate every parent's request to volunteer. To more effectively accommodate all parents, the school is developing a volunteer schedule for parents. Parents will be asked to sign up for a particular day, time, and function to help the school manage the volume of parents engaged in school activities. The school has also hired a full-time parent

coordinator to develop this schedule and help identify areas for and manage processes related to parent involvement. And, while parents are in the school throughout the day, in response to issues raised by parents for a more structured organization, the school has raised additional funding to develop a parent resource center to which parents can go for information and materials.

- *Working with families.* Through Mrs. Malone's open door policy, parents and students always have ready access to her. Tapping her knowledge of the resources available through Flanner House Inc. and in the larger community, she refers families to community resources for assistance. School staff follow up with families after each of these visits to ensure they are getting the help they need.

School programs

- *Project-based learning.* Students must prepare four projects per school year with each topic requiring oral, written, and visual reports. Parents are actively involved with their children in preparing their presentations. Even students in kindergarten write and read their own reports. In the last school year, one second-grader gave a report on Russia and brought a Russian immigrant (who is now a medical doctor in Indianapolis) as a guest speaker for her report. The speaker brought Russian treats for the children and provided a detailed background on life in Russia.
- *Traditions.* One of the school's traditions is for each class of students to do something special specifically designed for the class to follow as a way to build support and rapport across the student body. Class representatives from each grade first meet with school leaders to discuss possible ideas. For example, on one occasion this past year's fourth graders reported on their plans for recognizing the third grade students as they prepared to move from the third to the fourth grade. The school's current third graders in turn recognized the school's second graders by giving them each a pen in anticipation for learning cursive writing in the upcoming school year as new third graders.

Partnerships and Donations

- *Indianapolis Public Schools.* Flanner House, Inc. has had a long relationship with the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) that has benefited thousands of families. The school houses both IPS kindergarten and GED programs. The IPS kindergarten class has been offered for over eighteen years, and the GED program has been in existence for over fifteen years. The school also contracts with IPS for food services.
- *City parks.* The City's parks department has supported Flanner House initiatives for many years. The school is located adjacent to a city park and facilities; Flanner House students and families use the park for recreational purposes, and the school uses a local parks gymnasium for physical education. Youth in parks department programs participated in Flanner House Elementary's smoking cessation program and the parks department is helping Flanner House Elementary and the Orchard School identify ways the schools can use the city's parks in their joint community-based projects initiative.
- *The Orchard School.* Flanner House Elementary and the Orchard School are jointly engaged in community-based projects to connect the schools' teachers, students and parents together in promoting diversity. For example, the schools performed a holiday program together during the past school year, and for next year are planning a tree-planting event and a kite-making activity in which students will go to a city park together to fly their creations.
- *Public library.* Flanner House Elementary students have benefited from the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library branch housed on the campus. The library has even been included in plans for a larger expansion that the Flanner House umbrella organization has planned for all of its programs, including the charter school. With such easy accessibility to a full library, students are able to conduct research for school reports and find a variety of books for recreational reading,

and teachers are able to draw upon the library's resources to supplement their classroom instruction.

Supplemental programs and activities

- *Tobacco-smoking cessation.* In partnership with Clarian Health and the Indiana Black Expo, Flanner House Elementary's third and fourth graders were trained as peer leaders for smoking cessation. Initially, the students were simply learning about the dangers of smoking. The students did so well learning about tobacco prevention that they were then trained as peer leaders during the school year. Typically the age for training students is much higher, but according to school leaders the age limit was reduced for the Flanner House Elementary students. After being trained as student peer leaders in this year-round program, Flanner House Elementary's students will now go to other schools to educate their peers about the dangers of smoking.
- *Before- and after-school programs.* The school has a before- and after- school program in which, according to school leaders, more than seventy-five percent of students participate. The programs involve tutoring, homework help, a Drop Everything And Read program, and structured recreational activities. Through the recreational activities, students play sports and group games.

Staffing

- *Teachers as partners.* Flanner House Elementary's staff is diverse in terms of age and experience, and teachers use this diversity to their benefit. Same-grade teachers meet daily to collaborate on lesson planning and to share ideas, and the whole teaching staff meets at least once every two weeks to share best practices. The school's education director also works with teachers to establish strong teacher teams. When new staff members come on board, school leaders and the other teachers assist them in becoming full partners in the school community. The more experienced teachers mentor less experienced teachers by providing insights and sharing experiences. The less experienced teachers in turn share their current research and information from their teacher training programs. Teacher experience levels range from new teachers with only one year of experience to experienced teachers with over 25 years of teaching experience.
- *Staff involvement.* The director of education has been an integral part in developing the culture and educational program of the school, but the school recognizes it cannot rely solely upon her. The staff has therefore been organized into committees of different academic disciplines to think through curriculum-related issues. Teachers work together to connect the curriculum across the grade levels as well as across subject areas to create a coherent and integrated educational program.

School governance

- The school's active board (board meetings typically yield 95% attendance rates) reviews financial statements to ensure financial accountability, supports school administration in staffing decisions, provides legal assistance, and helps identify resources within the community (e.g., potential partnerships and fund raising). Several of the school's founding board members were originally on the board of Flanner House of Indianapolis, thus bringing their vast knowledge of the organization to the school's benefit. Board members include a parent, two experienced educators, business leaders, and several individuals experienced in non-profit management and fundraising. In keeping with the school's tradition that students are respected partners in their education, this school's board includes a current Flanner House Elementary student.

School management

- While the board and school leadership have clearly delineated roles, staff work closely together – often assuming responsibilities for one another as needed – to ensure each aspect of school operations is adequately addressed. The school's administration included Executive Director

Cynthia Diamond, Education Director Frances Malone, Business Manager Deneen Owens, and Public Relations Director Libby Scott. Ms. Diamond oversaw the school's transition from a private elementary school into a public charter school, and guides the overall vision and management needs of the charter school. Ms. Malone supervises academic matters and plays an instrumental role in creating the learning culture and serving as an advisor to students, families, and teachers. Ms. Owens oversees the day-to-day business operations for the school, including start-up operations, accounting, and reporting requirements. Ms. Scott conducts community outreach and marketing.

Facilities

- The school is on the near northwest side of Indianapolis at 2424 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Street. The school facility, housed on the Flanner House of Indianapolis campus, shares its space with the Flanner House Child Development Center. The proximity of the school to the other Flanner House programs allows students and families access to various social services. The school currently has five classrooms and administrative offices in the school building, with several adjacent modulars used as temporary classrooms until a new facility is built. The school is located adjacent to Watkins Park on a campus that also houses a branch of the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library. The school will begin constructing a new facility in the fall of 2003.